

THE DOOLITTLE RAIDERS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, it is with pride and humility that I stand and thank my colleagues for passing S. 381 by unanimous consent last night. Once passed by the House and signed by the President, this bill will award Congressional Gold Medals to the surviving World War II heroes we know as the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders.

The effort to pass this measure has been a personal one to me. I thank 78 of my colleagues who have cosponsored the resolution. It proves the Senate can still reach consensus. I especially thank Senator BOOZMAN, who is my original Republican counterpart, in introducing this bill in February. Also, original cosponsors Senator MURRAY and BAUCUS and TESTER and NELSON and CANTWELL and SCHATZ—original cosponsors.

I wish Senator Lautenberg, also an original cosponsor and close personal friend, the last World War II veteran in the Senate, were here today to see its passage.

My special thanks to Senator CORNYN for his work on this and especially Senator AYOTTE. They have my personal thanks for helping to bring so many Republicans to sponsor this bill with us.

Many of you know the story of the Doolittle Raid. More than 71 years ago, following the attack of Pearl Harbor just 4 months earlier, 80 brave American airmen launched a mission that would become our Nation's first offensive action against Japanese soil in the Second World War. They volunteered for what was called an "extremely hazardous mission" without knowing at the time what it actually entailed. Under the leadership of LTC James Doolittle, the raid involved launching 16 U.S. Army Air Corps B-25 Mitchell bombers from the deck of the USS Hornet, a feat that had never been attempted in combat before.

On April 18, 1942, again just a few months after Pearl Harbor, 650 miles from its intended target, the Hornet encountered Japanese ships. Fearing the mission might be compromised, the raiders decided to launch 170 miles earlier than anticipated. These men accepted the risk that they might not have enough fuel to make it safely beyond Japanese-occupied China. The consequences meant the Raiders would almost certainly have to crash land or bail out, either above Japanese-occupied China or over the home islands of Japan. Any survivors would certainly be subjected to imprisonment or torture or death.

After reaching their targets, 15 of the bombers continued to China. The 16th, dangerously low on fuel, headed to Russia. The total distance traveled by the Raiders averaged 2,250 nautical miles over a period of 13 hours, making it the longest combat mission ever flown in a B-25 during the war. Of the 80 Raiders who launched that day, 8 were captured. Of those eight prisoners, three were executed, one died of

disease, and four survived as prisoners of war and returned home after the war.

The Doolittle Raid was a turning point for the Pacific theater and set the stage for Allied victory. Of the original 80 Raiders, 4 survive today. A Raider from Cincinnati, my home State, MAJ Tom Griffin, passed away on February 26 of this year, the very night I introduced S. 381. Major Griffin was the navigator of plane No.9, the Whirling Dervish, on the Doolittle Raid. He survived the mission and continued to fly until he was shot down in 1943 and held in a German POW camp for 2 years.

When the war ended, Major Griffin returned home to Cincinnati and later owned his own accounting business.

Similar to our veterans past and present, he asked for nothing. These veterans served simply because their Nation asked. For many years the surviving raiders gathered to celebrate the mission and to honor their departed fellow Raiders. This year's celebration was bittersweet. It was their final reunion, they decided. All the remaining Raiders are in their nineties and it is becoming hard for them to make the trip. It was decided this would be their final reunion.

This is an article, a story in the Plain Dealer in Cleveland, of the final reunion which took place in Dayton, OH. The three remaining survivors who could make the trip called out "here" as a historian read the rollcall. They then raised a goblet inscribed with their names and toasted their fellow Raiders with a bottle of 1896 Cognac, a bottle that Commander Jimmy Doolittle passed down for the Raiders' final toast. Seventy-six other goblets were turned upside down, one for each of the comrades who had passed away. Hundreds of people watched the solemn ceremony and offered their respects.

Speaker BOEHNER, whose district is nearby Dayton, OH, sent a letter in honor of the occasion.

In an Associated Press article on the ceremony, a 12-year-old boy whose grandparents brought him to the event said, "I felt like I owed them a few short hours of the thousands of hours I will be on this Earth."

This journey started 2 years ago for me when Brian Anderson, the Sergeant at Arms for the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders Association, approached my office seeking a proclamation for the 70th anniversary of the raid. We achieved that goal, passing S. 418 in August 2012 by unanimous consent. But that was not enough for Brian. It was not enough to honor these men and what they had accomplished. We set our goal of awarding the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award bestowed by Congress, limited to two a year in this body, to the Raiders.

This honor is designated to those who "have performed an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized a major achievement in the

recipient's field long after the achievement."

These 80 veterans met that description. They exemplified our highest ideals of courage and service. They deserved to be recognized.

President Kennedy said "a nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors and the men it remembers."

We, our Nation, honor those who serve. I call on the House and I call on the Speaker to quickly act on this legislation. Sitting in the Chamber today is a Senator from Texas, the senior Senator from Texas, who played a major role with Senator AYOTTE and others in gathering cosponsors for this Congressional Gold Medal. I thank Senator CORNYN for his work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to turn the compliment around and extend my appreciation to the Senator from Ohio Mr. BROWN for his leadership on this issue. This is long overdue to these great American patriots, the recognition they so justly earned.

FORT HOOD AND PURPLE HEARTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, 4 years ago an Islamic radical who identified with Al Qaeda and supported the cause of global jihad opened fire at Fort Hood Army base in Killeen, TX. The shooter eventually killed 12 soldiers and 1 civilian, while wounding 30 others. He might have killed or wounded many more but for the selflessness of a civilian physician's assistant by the name of Michael Cahill and an Army captain named John Gaffaney, both of whom charged the gunman and gave their lives in order to save the lives of others.

Four years later we continue to honor their tremendous sacrifice and we continue to honor the memories of all those who gave their lives or were injured on that awful day. Back in August, the Fort Hood shooter was sentenced to death for his crime and appropriately so. Let me be clear about what the nature of this crime was. This was not an ordinary criminal event. This was a terrorist attack, plain and simple, committed by a man who had reportedly had at least 20 different email communications with a senior Al Qaeda figure by the name of Anwar al-Awlaki. The late Mr. Awlaki, who was killed by a U.S. drone strike in September 2011, also had contacts, well documented, with the so-called Underwear Bomber, who tried to blow up Northwest Airlines flight 253 just 7 weeks after the massacre at Fort Hood.

Following the Fort Hood attack, Awlaki celebrated the shooter as a hero. He called him a hero. He also told Al Jazeera that prior to the attack, the gunman had specifically asked him whether Islamic law justified "killing U.S. soldiers and officers."

The Fort Hood shooter had repeatedly and unapologetically said that